

Budget Formulation Meeting – Bureau of Indian Affairs – January 28, 2015
Brenda Bowie, Treasurer – Tribal Council

I attended a meeting with five other Tribes and the Bureau of Indian Affairs to talk about the FY 2017 budget. Budgets are prepared two years in advance. Amy Dutschke, Melissa Johnson, Virgil Aikins and Debra Doka from the BIA and Regional BIA Budget office met with the Tribes to talk about future funding needs.

There was a lot of discussion on the various programs. The majority of the Tribes chose Aid to Tribal Government as their number one budget priority. The second priority was a tie between Indian Child Welfare Act, Contract Support, Social Services, and Education.

Also the budget amounts have basically stayed the same since 1996 and why can't there be some realistic COLA built into the program. How can Tribes continue to do business with low budget allocations? There was also discussion on the BIA Contract Support Cost Workgroup. Direct Contract Support Costs pay for administrative activities that are not contained in either the IDC pool or direct program funds. This money can be used for facilities, unemployment and Woman's Compensation. The workgroup came up with many recommendations. Jim Mackey was there from Susanville and he is a part of this group.

Participation in this meeting proved to be extremely valuable for me. I learned a lot and now understand why our Education funding is so limited. I learned that our Tribe only receives enough funding for basically one person. Most of the Education money goes to the Navajo Tribe or to the all-Indian College programs. The most important thing our Tribe needs to understand is that we basically will need to self-fund ourselves for all our education needs.